

What is claimed is:

- 1 1. A networked apparatus that belongs to a group, and that is
2 connected via a network to at least one device in the group
3 and to at least one device out of the group, comprising:
4 a storage unit operable to store a content;
5 a receiving unit operable to receive from a device, a
6 duplication request for the content;
7 a judging unit operable to judge whether the device is
8 in the group or out of the group; and
9 a control unit operable to duplicate the content to the
10 device if judged to be in the group, and impose restrictions
11 on duplication of the content to the device if judged to be
12 out of the group.

- 1 2. The networked apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein
2 the storage unit stores duplication restricting
3 information that is attached to the content, the duplication
4 restricting information showing (i) a permitted number
5 representing right to duplicate the content, and (ii)
6 restrictions to be imposed on duplication of the content to
7 a device that is out of the group, and
8 the control unit controls duplication of the content based
9 on the duplication restricting information.

- 1 3. The networked apparatus according to Claim 2, wherein
2 each device that is in the group is one of a first type

3 device that records a content to a non-portable recording medium
4 and a second type device that records a content to a portable
5 recording medium,

6 the permitted number is a sum of a permitted number of
7 duplications to a first type device and a permitted number of
8 duplications to a second type device,

9 the control unit judges, if the device issued the
10 duplication request is judged to be in the group, whether the
11 device is a first type device or a second type device, and controls
12 duplication of the content based on the judgment by the control
13 unit and the duplication restricting information.

1 4. The networked apparatus according to Claim 2, wherein
2 each device that is in the group belongs to at least one
3 subgroup,

4 the storage unit stores in advance a first table showing
5 whether duplication of the content from a subgroup to another
6 subgroup is permitted, and

7 the control unit judges, if the device issued the
8 duplication request is judged to be in the group, to which
9 subgroup the device belongs, and controls duplication of the
10 content based on the judgment by the control unit, the
11 duplication restricting information, and the first table.

1 5. The networked apparatus according to Claim 2, wherein
2 the control unit transmits to the device issued the
3 duplication request if judged to be in the group, information

4 showing a permitted number that is equal to or smaller than
5 the permitted number stored in the storage unit so as to transfer
6 at least part of the right to duplicate the content, and refuses
7 to perform the transmission to the device issued the duplication
8 request if judged to be out of the group.

1 6. The networked apparatus according to Claim 5, wherein
2 the control unit transmits to the device issued the
3 duplication request, the content attached by duplication
4 restricting information that includes the permitted number
5 showing said equal or smaller number.

1 7. The networked apparatus according to Claim 2, wherein
2 the networked apparatus stores secret information that
3 is also stored in all devices that is in the group, and
4 the judging unit judges that the device issued the
5 duplication request is in the group if the device has the secret
6 information, and otherwise judges that the device is out of
7 the group.

1 8. The networked apparatus according to Claim 7, wherein
2 the control unit includes:
3 a first generating unit operable to generate a first
4 permitted number of duplications; and
5 a second generating unit operable to generate a
6 second permitted number of duplications, the second permitted
7 number being obtained by subtracting the first permitted number

8 from the permitted number that is currently stored in the storage
9 unit, and

10 the control unit (i) transmits the first permitted number
11 and the content to the device issued the duplication request
12 so as to transfer at least part of the right to duplicate the
13 content, and (ii) overwrites the permitted number with the second
14 permitted number.

1 9. The networked apparatus according to Claim 8, wherein
2 the duplication request is composed of a requested number
3 of duplications of the content,

4 the first generating unit judges whether the permitted
5 number stored in the storage unit is equal to or greater than
6 the requested number, and designates, if the judgment is
7 affirmative, the requested number as the first permitted number,
8 and designates, if the judgment is negative, the permitted number
9 as the first permitted number.

1 10. The networked apparatus according to Claim 8, wherein
2 each device that is in the group is one of a first type
3 device that records a content to a non-portable recording medium
4 and a second type device that records a content to a portable
5 recording medium,

6 the permitted number is a sum of a permitted number of
7 duplications to a first type device and a permitted number of
8 duplications to a second type device,

9 the duplication request is composed of a requested number

10 of duplications of the content to a first type device and a
11 requested number of duplications of the content to a second
12 type device,

13 the first generating unit judges whether each of the two
14 permitted numbers are equal to or greater than a corresponding
15 one of the two requested numbers, and designates, if the judgment
16 is affirmative, a sum of the two requested numbers as the first
17 permitted number, and designates, if the judgment is negative,
18 a sum of the two permitted numbers as the first permitted number.

1 11. The networked apparatus according to Claim 10, wherein
2 each device that is in the group belongs to at least one
3 subgroup,

4 the first generating unit stores a first table showing
5 whether duplication of the content from a subgroup to another
6 subgroup is permitted, judges with reference to the first table
7 whether duplication of the content to the device issued the
8 duplication request is permitted, and generates the first
9 permitted number if the judgment is affirmative.

1 12. The networked apparatus according to Claim 11, wherein
2 the first generating unit further stores a second table
3 showing subgroup identifiers each associated with an upper limit
4 to a permitted number that is possibly held in total by devices
5 belonging to a subgroup identified by a corresponding subgroup
6 identifier,

7 the duplication request includes a subgroup identifier

8 identifying a subgroup to which the device issued the duplication
9 request belongs, and

10 the first generating unit generates the first permitted
11 number with reference to the second table.

1 13. The networked apparatus according to Claim 11, wherein
2 the control unit transmits to the device issued the
3 duplication request, the first and second tables together with
4 the content and the first permitted number.

1 14. The networked apparatus according to Claim 2, further
2 comprising a time management unit operable to clock a
3 date-and-time, wherein

4 the control unit stores a predetermined date-and-time,
5 and a post-update permitted number, and updates, when the
6 date-and-time clocked by the time management unit reaches the
7 predetermined date-and-time, the permitted number stored in
8 the storage unit by overwriting with the post-update permitted
9 number.

1 15. The networked apparatus according to Claim 2, further
2 comprising a time management unit operable to clock a
3 date-and-time, wherein

4 the control unit stores a predetermined date-and-time
5 and information identifying a device to which the content is
6 to be duplicated, and transmits, when the date-and-time clocked
7 by the time management unit reaches the predetermined

8 date-and-time, to the identified device, the content together
9 with a permitted number that is equal to or smaller than the
10 permitted number stored in the storage unit so as to transfer
11 at least part of the right to duplicate the content.

1 16. The networked apparatus according to Claim 2, wherein
2 the control unit transmits to the device if judged to
3 be out of the group, the content together with right to play
4 back the content.

1 17. A content duplication management system comprising a first
2 device that belongs to a group, and a second device connected
3 to the first device via a network, wherein
4 the first device includes:
5 a storage unit storing a content and a permitted
6 number representing right to duplicate the content;
7 a receiving unit operable to receive from the second
8 device, a duplication request for the content;
9 a judging unit operable to judge whether the second
10 device belongs to the group; and
11 a control unit operable to transmit to the second
12 device if judged to belong to the group, information showing
13 a permitted number that is equal to or smaller than the permitted
14 number stored in the control unit so as to transfer at least
15 part of the right to duplicate the content, and refuses to perform
16 the transmission to the second device if judged to be out of
17 the group, and

18 the second device includes:
19 a requesting unit operable to transmit to the first
20 device, a duplication request for the content; and
21 an obtaining unit operable to receive from the first
22 device to store the content and the permitted number of
23 duplications.

1 18. The content management system according to Claim 17, further
2 comprising a plurality of devices that belong to the group,
3 wherein

4 the first device further includes a detection information
5 transmitting unit operable to transmit to each of the devices,
6 detection information used to detect the requested content,
7 and

8 each of the devices receives the detection information
9 and performs a search based on the detection information to
10 judge whether there is the requested content stored within the
11 device.

1 19. A content duplication management method for use by a
2 networked apparatus, the networked apparatus stores a content,
3 belongs to a group, and is connected via a network to at least
4 one device in the group and to at least one device out of the
5 group, the method comprising:

6 a receiving step of receiving from a device, a duplication
7 request for the content;

8 a judging step of judging whether the device is in the

9 group or out of the group; and
10 a controlling step of duplicating the content to the device
11 if judged to be in the group, and imposing restrictions on
12 duplication of the content to the device if judged to be out
13 of the group.

1 20. A content duplication management program for use by a
2 networked apparatus, the networked apparatus stores a content,
3 belongs to a group, and is connected via a network to at least
4 one device in the group and to at least one device out of the
5 group, the program comprising:
6 a receiving step of receiving from a device, a duplication
7 request for the content;
8 a judging step of judging whether the device is in the
9 group or out of the group; and
10 a controlling step of duplicating the content to the device
11 if judged to be in the group, and imposing restrictions on
12 duplication of the content to the device if judged to be out
13 of the group.